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ABSTRACT

This manual is an introduction to organizing schools and the community into an alliance for the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse. It was written for people who have had little or no experience in organizing. It is hoped that this guide will help readers to analyze their situations so they can plan prevention and early intervention activities; decide which concerns or problems should be addressed first; set goals and select the best methods for making changes; anticipate and overcome stumbling blocks; outline a plan for solving problems; keep people interested and working together; and maintain efforts over time. The first section defines prevention and organizes alcohol and other drug abuse prevention into five major strategies: (1) providing factual and relevant information; (2) educating; (3) developing alternatives; (4) community organizing; and (5) changing social policy. Characteristics of effective prevention programs are described. Other sections concentrate on how to: get started, help the group run smoothly, develop an alliance plan, and formulate an action plan. The final section suggests activities for preventing alcohol and other drug abuse. Activities are included for families; schools, colleges and universities; religious organizations; law enforcement and the justice system; the media; businesses; and the community. Resources for further assistance are given and an action plan form is included. (NB)

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A HANDS-ON GUIDE TO BUILDING ALLIANCES FOR THE PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUG ABUSE

By Richard Yoast, Ph.D.

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What You Can Do

A Hands-on Guide to Building Alliances
for the Prevention of
Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

Second Edition

by Richard Yoast, Ph.D.

Edited by Kevin McIntyre

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Writing a manual on community organizing is much like the intended act itself; it benefits from the contributions of others who have an interest in the issue at hand. Production of *What You Can Do* owes itself to several such people. Contributors to the first edition included Michel Avery, Susan Christenson, Betsy Densmore, Nancy Kaufman, and Marc Levy.

The current, revised edition has benefited from the insights of others who have committed themselves to the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse. Steven J. Ojibway, CEAP, of the Wisconsin Office on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse wrote the paper that became the basis of the chapter on specific prevention activities. Douglas White of the Wisconsin Clearinghouse staff contributed the appendix on resources for additional assistance.

CONTENTS

Foreword

Prevention: What Is It? *3*
- Characteristics of effective prevention programs
- Why bother with prevention?
- Prevention and high-risk populations

Getting Started *7*
- Where do you start?
- How to begin
- Involving others
- Your contribution as a leader

Helping Your Group Run Smoothly *15*
- Calling the alliance together
- The first meeting
- Setting the agenda
- Establishing ground rules
- Recognizing meeting phases
- Creating a positive environment for your meeting

Developing Your Alliance Plan *21*
- Defining the problem
- Determining your target of change
- Where to get information about your community
- Developing strategies

Formulating Your Action Plan *31*
- Evaluation

Suggested Activities for Preventing Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse *35*
- What families can do
- What schools, colleges and universities can do
- What religious organizations can do
- What law enforcement and the justice system can do
- What the media can do
- What businesses can do
- More ideas for what your community can do

Resources for Further Assistance *43*

Action Plan Form *49*

FOREWORD

This manual is an introduction to organizing your schools and community into an alliance for the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse. The techniques also apply to the prevention of other social problems facing youth and adults. It is written for people who have had little or no experience in organizing but who have an interest in changing what is happening around them.

What You Can Do is a guideline—it's up to you to decide which suggestions you want to use and how. Organizing for action is the first step—one which is far easier than you may expect. Reading this manual will not make you a prevention expert or a full-time organizer overnight. It will help you:

- analyze your situation so you can plan prevention and early intervention activities;
- decide which concerns or problems you want to address first;
- set your goals and select the best method for making changes;
- anticipate and overcome stumbling blocks;
- outline a plan for solving problems;
- keep people interested and working together; and
- maintain your efforts over time.

Alcohol and other drug abuse can be prevented by citizens working together. Parents, teens, teachers and other school staff, law enforcement personnel, community agencies, businesses, civic and social clubs, and religious organizations can all play important parts.

Regardless of your experience in organizing, you are a powerhouse of ideas, skills and caring. You have the ability to learn and do things you've never done before. We hope this manual will enable you to unleash some of your energies, and those of your neighbors, friends and colleagues, to make your school and community a better place in which to live and grow.

PREVENTION: WHAT IS IT?

Prevention is planned, purposeful activities which promote the emotional, intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social health of individuals and their communities. The purpose of prevention is to preclude, forestall or stop the development of problems. Prevention helps protect people from, and strengthen their resistance to, harmful influences.

The prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse can be divided into five major strategies. Your prevention plan will be most effective if it combines several, or all, of these:

• *providing factual and relevant information.* Topics should include the effects, dangers and consequences of alcohol and other drugs; examples of their abuse; reasons, causes and risk factors for use and abuse; and the availability of local prevention and treatment resources. The goal is to create awareness about a problem, issue or service so that people can make informed decisions about their lives. Information can be provided through the distribution of materials which are printed (for example, pamphlets, booklets, manuals, posters, and newsletters), audiovisual (audio and video cassettes, slide shows), and electronic (software programs for personal computers); through the use of mass media (television, radio, magazines, and newspapers); and via public gatherings (assemblies, forums, meetings, debates, displays, and information fairs).

• *educating.* This strategy incorporates activities designed to improve thinking, learning, coping, and decision-making skills. The goal of education is to change or reinforce old attitudes and behaviors and create new ones. Educational strategies include the use of alcohol and other drug curricula in kindergarten through 12th grades, peer or parent education programs and support groups, small group learning activities, training workshops, and skill development (to improve communication, decision making, assertiveness, or the ability to refuse offers of alcohol or other drugs).

• *developing alternatives.* These should fulfill or surpass the feelings that using alcohol or other drugs provides. The goal of alternative activities is to help people feel good about themselves—without the use of drugs—by providing a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. Examples include sports and other challenging physical activities, peer counseling, volunteer work, political action, hobbies, and intellectual challenges.

• *community organizing.* This strategy brings people together to work on a problem. The goal of community organizing is to make constructive changes in the school or community environment so that it responds more to individual needs, promotes and supports healthy behaviors, and causes fewer problems. Community organizing gives people a sense of power over their own lives and makes them feel part of a larger network of concerned citizens. It includes efforts by school planning groups, parents' groups, alliances and task forces, and block and neighborhood organizations.

• *changing social policy*—the guidelines reflected in laws, regulations, standards, and public plans that influence our decisions. The goal of social policies is to provide a standard against which people can compare their own behavior. Policies set limits about what is and isn't acceptable. Effective social policies are clear, well known and consistently and fairly enforced. Social policies may be specific (for example, providing free New Year's Eve bus transportation) or broad (a general disapproval of public drunkenness).

Characteristics of effective prevention programs

In addition to using multiple strategies, there are several other attributes of effective prevention programs. According to the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors and the National Prevention Network[1], these include:

• a sound process for planning the program;

• a written document that specifies goals and objectives focused on the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse;

• the targeting of all elements of the community or population served;

• sensitivity to the needs of the community, including the special needs of individuals and cultural groups;

• being a part of the overall health care system and other health promotion efforts;

• the involvement of, and ownership by, the community;

- a long-term commitment;

- an emphasis on multiple systems within the community, notably family, church, school, law enforcement, and social services;

- the use of marketing and promotion which portrays the positive aspects of prevention for the community;

- a strong evaluation component; and

- the ability to replicate the program in a new or different setting.

Why bother with prevention?

There are many reasons for considering prevention. Prevention improves the quality of life by promoting individual health and by strengthening communities and the organizations or institutions in them. It reduces the use of costly treatment facilities. And it lowers such "hidden" costs as vandalism, worker and student absenteeism, and family disruption by keeping individuals, families, friends, and workers from the problems that accompany alcohol or other drug abuse.

Prevention provides people the opportunity to take charge of and improve their own lives. It enables them to change conditions which are harmful to them. As people are empowered, they can further meet other challenges.

Prevention fits naturally into many settings. Many essential activities of prevention already take place in schools, businesses, civic groups, clubs, churches, and law enforcement. Effective prevention builds on the strength within communities.

Finally, prevention is fun! Working with people who are not in a crisis (that is, needing treatment) allows time to be creative and experimental. You can brainstorm new ideas, try them out and discover what works.

Prevention can be effective in your community. Despite this, managing alcohol and other drugs requires a full range of activities; prevention alone cannot tackle the problem. Each school and community also needs a wide range of intervention, counseling and treatment programs which deal with existing problems so as to reduce their effects. These include student assistance programs (SAPs), employee assistance programs (EAPs), outpatient and inpatient treatment services, and aftercare programs for those who have recently left treatment.

Prevention and high-risk populations

Prevention may target whole communities or parts of them. One approach to prevention is to focus on individuals and groups that are considered to be at high risk for abusing alcohol and other drugs.

There are many factors which may place people at higher risk. Factors which tend to increase the risk for youth to use or abuse alcohol or other drugs include:

- having a parent who is an alcohol or other drug abuser;
- dropping out of school;
- becoming pregnant;
- being economically disadvantaged;
- being the victim of physical, sexual or psychological abuse;
- experiencing mental health problems; or
- experiencing long-term physical pain due to injury.

Many adults may also be at greater risk. Men and women who are isolated and lack social contact, are experiencing overwhelming stresses in their lives, are adult children of alcoholics or other drug abusers, or have passed through major transitions in life (such as the loss of a job or loved one) may be more likely to use and abuse alcohol and other drugs.

Many factors may increase risk. However, being in a high-risk group does not necessarily mean someone will use or abuse alcohol or other drugs. Knowledge of risk status will help you focus your efforts. You should realize, though, that people respond differently to the challenges they face in life. Some of the people at greatest risk are also the most resilient!

1. National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors and the National Prevention Network. (January 1989). *Prevention in perspective.*

GETTING STARTED

Where do you start?

You start by working together. School and community problems require solutions obtained from a variety of individuals working together in a group. Forming alliances to work on such problems is a long-standing tradition. Such groups often begin in response to federal and state laws, a recent uproar in the press, or because someone has been affected greatly enough that they decide to act. Unfortunately, members are frequently appointed to a committee or task force without knowing why they were chosen or what they were supposed to do. These types of efforts often start slowly and wind up being ignored. Or they start with a lot of publicity and little direction. Often members become frustrated and stop attending meetings. Before long the effort has become a sad and distasteful memory.

This does not have to be your experience! An effective prevention alliance consists of people persuaded that they have some interest in tackling a specific problem together. This requires:

- a statement of purpose;
- clear goals, tasks and roles;
- a wide range of truly interested and motivated volunteers;
- professionals who will devote their time because they care, not just because they were assigned, or simply because your tasks matched their job descriptions;
- members who commit themselves to work for an agreed-upon time period;
- leaders, chosen by the group, who are committed to seeing the task through;
- sufficient organization to focus on accomplishing goals;
- an assessment of community needs and problems; and

- continuing dialogue with the people employed involved with the organizations or problems you are trying to change.

Each alliance will be different and will experiment through trial and error. What's important is that you are organized, that your group is comfortable and enthusiastic about the goals it sets and that your efforts are relevant to your community's needs.

How to begin

You've decided that you want to try to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse. How do you move from commitment to action? What do you do initially?

First, write down your concerns. What specifically is bothering you? What do you see in your school or community that needs to be changed? What indicates there is a problem? For example, the problem you identify may be student use of alcohol and/or other drugs. Some indicators may be vandalism, arrests, parent complaints, newspaper reports, declining school grades, absentee rates, or the number of high school dropouts. Or the problem may be that there is no consistent, comprehensive means in your school and community for addressing alcohol and other drug problems. Indicators may be a lack of a comprehensive K-12 drug education curriculum, unclear school or community policies, or a lack of school student assistance programs and community prevention and treatment services.

Be comprehensive. Put all your thoughts down. Start a list of the things that you think need to occur for the situation to improve. Don't lay blame. Rather, try to identify where positive actions can occur.

Next, decide which of these problems is the most important to you. Number them in order of importance. If you know other people who share similar concerns, talk with them. Show them your list. Ask them to discuss and add to it. Don't worry about the solutions yet.

It's extremely important throughout the organizing and planning process that you keep written records. This is the only way you can effectively remember what you've already done and what still remains. It will require time to do but will save you a great deal of headache and confusion in the long run.

Involving others

Once you've completed your list, you are ready to get others involved. Think about who else may be concerned with these problems. Be creative. Consider all the kinds of people who may be concerned with or affected by a particular problem. If you know these people, you can contact them directly. If not, perhaps someone you know can help you make the initial contact.

Try to get a representative group of concerned people together to discuss the issue. Or assemble a group of people with whom you've had some contact and who you think are concerned about various local problems. Bring everyone together and let them talk about their concerns. As a third alternative, you can start with a small core group but broaden the representation as opportunities permit. Always keep in mind how others can be incorporated into your efforts as quickly as possible.

As you organize a group, keep in mind that there are some characteristics to seek in others:

- a commitment to a common purpose;
- a willingness to work, to attend regular meetings and to participate for an agreed-upon amount of time;
- an ability to contribute different kinds of knowledge, experience or skills;
- a diverse background and network of family, friends and coworkers that will bring in the support of other groups;
- comfort in working with others. This is not to say that there will not or should not be conflict. Indeed, conflict is often useful for bringing up new ideas or spurring new activities. Participants should feel free to disagree openly and still be able to work together in constructive ways.

Finding people to join your group will probably be fairly easy. But if you're stuck for some ideas about where to look for people, consider:

- concerned friends and relatives;
- neighbors, neighborhood associations and community centers;
- elected officials;

- parent-teacher organizations;
- youth groups (such as the YMCA, YWCA, 4-H, Boy or Girl Scouts);
- employee clubs and labor unions;
- civic and social associations;
- community professionals;
- the chamber of commerce or other business associations;
- police and other law enforcement personnel; and
- anyone who's had a problem in the area of concern to you but who is detached enough to think clearly and creatively about it.

Individuals, organizations and businesses can contribute many things to your group, including ideas, labor, money, skills in specific areas, prestige and influence, the use of facilities (to hold meetings, make phone calls, or assemble mailings), and material goods (such as postage stamps, paper, supplies, and refreshments). Everyone has something to contribute and likes to feel wanted and useful. If someone can't think of how they can participate, help them with ideas.

Your contribution as a leader

You, the organizer? Sound frightening? It doesn't have to be. Leadership means different things to different people. Leaders function in many ways. They can:

- serve as a model or example for the group;
- help the group solve problems;
- encourage cooperation between group members;
- act as a catalyst to spark energy and life in the group;

- establish a climate that is conducive to solving problems; and

- establish a process and guidelines for how the group will function.

Leadership is not limited to the chairperson, president or any single person. A group will be stronger if it draws on the different leadership skills of each member. Group activities require a range of roles and skills and the active involvement of all members. Yet, many individuals do not recognize the leadership abilities they have, and many groups do not utilize the abilities of their members. Don't be intimidated by the word "leadership." No matter what your formal role in the group is, there are things you can do to help it along. That is what leadership is all about.

The pointers below describe specific things you and other group members can do to make your leadership more effective.

Spread out the leadership. Sharing responsibility is healthy for you and your group. If others share the leadership—with everyone clear about what they will or won't do and what they expect of others—you won't bear all the responsibility yourself. When you get tired or down, others will be there to keep your cause going. The cause will keep going even if an important member drops out. If you share the responsibility, there will be a group to work on solutions—and to shoulder the blame—when problems arise.

Don't insist on having a president if you don't need one. If group leadership is shared, then you are free to have an organization which reflects that. If you don't get bogged down in a hierarchy of officers, but have clearly defined tasks for everyone, you will enable each person to share responsibility and to learn. Some people will be more active than others and will probably play more of a leadership role. This need not be rigidly defined by titles, which often create in-groups and out-groups.

Clarify your own role. What functions will you perform in the group? Do you see yourself as an equal member of the group? Do you have a role as staff support to a community group because of agency or organization affiliation? What are your responsibilities? For how long? Have a clear understanding with the rest of the group about what should be expected of you—and what should not.

Know your capabilities and limits. Define what you can and can't do. Don't be afraid to say, "No." Your ability to act may depend on time, energy,

interest, personal skills, etc. Pass on jobs you can't or don't feel comfortable with. Don't be afraid to let others know your limitations. In a shared leadership situation, this is expected.

Come prepared. Take time to compose your thoughts and free your mind of other problems before a meeting. How people see and work with you depends on how you devote yourself to the task at hand. Your momentous achievements earlier in the day are not known to the rest of the group. Now is what counts.

Let people know what you're doing. The more that people know about and understand your work, the easier it will be for them to support and help you. If you want community acceptance, involve people in what you're doing. Good public relations is crucial. A high level of communication within a group will help avoid the formation of in- and out-groups. Everyone's best thinking will be utilized. Continuous contact with the groups you're trying to influence is absolutely essential. You need to know what they're thinking, doing, and why they agree or disagree with you. They need to know the same about you.

Keep people active. When given important tasks and decisions, people often stay motivated. Assess each person's skills and time commitments. Seek their assistance with appropriate tasks. Help the group distribute tasks so that everyone can use his or her skills and energy.

Communicate with others as an equal. No one likes a leader who forces his or her will on everyone else. You'll get much more work done if you see yourself as an equal to others in the group, and as temporary holder of a leadership assignment. Talk to people between meetings and activities. Ask for advice. Look at decision making as a shared group activity. Share the good and bad news, the credit and the blame.

Give and get feedback. Everyone, including you, needs to know when he or she is doing well or could do better. Organizing takes energy. We all need praise to refuel. Make sure that everyone in your group gets positive feedback from time to time. If you need to criticize someone's work, separate what it is that the person did poorly from your feelings about them as a whole. You can like a person but dislike something they did or how they did it. Offer positive suggestions about how something may be improved the next time rather than attacking someone or telling them how poorly they did. If you must vent your feelings, admit that they are your feelings and are not necessarily the result

of what that person did. All the venting in the world will not change what has already occurred.

Find people who have time. This isn't as easy as it sounds. Among your willing volunteers are people who aren't really committed to the cause. Through experience, get to know those who can be counted on to perform tasks assigned to them. Analyze why people want to be involved. Help fill their needs by giving them appropriate jobs and opportunities in their areas of interest.

Watch for too much success. Success can be scary. Responsibility and attention can be uncomfortable for some. Being pushed into the limelight can be startling. Look for these situations and give people extra encouragement. Talking about what's scary often makes it less of a problem.

Analyze frustrating failures. Things go wrong. When they do, it helps to look at them and find out what happened. Do it yourself, or get a friend or the group to help. Jot down the sequence of events, why they happened, what you did right, and what could have been done differently. Ask others who have had similar experiences for their ideas. Find alternative ways of getting the job done. And keep your chin up! All of us run into stumbling blocks. Working your way around them will make you stronger.

Rethink your goals. From time to time, it helps to step back and look at your hopes and accomplishments. Were your goals realistic? Have you accomplished some of what you set out to do? How can you change your tactics to meet your goals? Do your goals need to be redefined?

Don't feel bad if you need to scream. Organizing has its ups and down. Find a sympathetic person or a good listener and talk about your frustrations. Try to remember the ups that make it worthwhile. Patience and flexibility are essential to organizing. Stick to it for awhile and see what happens. Try again! Fire up!

HELPING YOUR GROUP RUN SMOOTHLY

Like it or not, meetings and organizing go hand in hand. Meetings can be fun. They can make your group lively, interesting and enjoyable. They can also flop. A good organizer is a master at running meetings. So, if you could use some help in making your meetings flow well, think about these tips.

Calling the alliance together

You and several others have agreed to discuss what you perceive is a problem. Though you may not have formed an organization yet, you are beginning to work as allies. Therefore, you should formally call the meeting together. This provides everyone with notice about when the meeting will be held and where. It helps to avoid hurt or anger which occur when people feel left out of discussions and decisions because no one let them know what was going on. It may take a little bit of time to organize your meeting but your group will benefit greatly. Sharing this task with one or two other people will make it easier.

To ensure the best attendance, contact people in person or over the phone. Send a reminder a few days before you are scheduled to meet. For those who can't attend, find out better times so they can join future meetings.

Before the meeting begins, one person should be designated to lead or facilitate the meeting and another to take minutes. Members can take turns if desired, although it is probably better for recording the minutes if the same person takes them during a particular meeting.

The first meeting

The initial meeting is often the most important one. Some people may be good friends. Others will be acquaintances. Some will not know anyone. Allow time for brief introductions and informal discussion or comments. This will give everyone the chance to talk immediately and to get over the barrier of making the first public statement to the group.

A first meeting goal is to identify the group's purpose and to see if those

who have attended are willing to join for future efforts. A good way to start this process is for each person to express why they came to the meeting and what they hope the group can accomplish. From these statements you can identify common goals.

If there is agreement among at least a few persons that the group should continue, the question then becomes, "How will we organize ourselves to accomplish our tasks?" If there is no agreement, talk with others or ask yourself if there's another way to express your concerns so others will want to join.

Setting the agenda

Before the meeting, plan and write your agenda. Set a time limit on the meeting. Assign a flexible amount of time you hope to spend on each item on the agenda. Make copies of the agenda to distribute at the meeting. When the meeting begins, ask members if they have any changes to recommend for the group's business.

Each agenda item should be introduced by someone who is ready to give a clear definition of the issue, a summary of background information, and a statement of the action the group needs to take (for example, listen to an announcement, make a decision, or brainstorm suggestions). If all members have this information before discussion begins, the group will be able to work effectively toward a commonly understood goal, rather than floundering in uncertainty.

Establishing ground rules

Groups operate best when the people in them know what the basic rules of conduct are. The rules listed here will help your group work well. You may find it useful to provide each member of your group with a copy of them at your first meeting.

Rule 1: Each member should participate actively. The group's success or failure does not rest on any one person but is shared by all members.

Rule 2: The roles and tasks of members should be clearly defined, whether for the facilitator, recorder, time keeper, or others. Everyone has a right to know what is expected of them.

Rule 3: Members should be fearlessly explicit. Everyone should take responsibility for clearly stating his or her views, feelings, expectations, and confusions. Doing so will make it easier for these considerations to be taken into account in discussions and decisions.

Rule 4: Each member should treat others with respect and dignity. Regardless of differences of background, opinions and values, each person deserves to be treated decently. Members should refrain from name-calling, belittling, accusing, and other actions which demean other people and threaten the functioning of your group.

Rule 5: The agenda should state what you realistically hope to accomplish within the time you have for the meeting. Priorities should be designated in order to avoid using time on unimportant matters. The group should be provided an opportunity to review and alter the agenda, if necessary, before the meeting begins.

Rule 6: The group should agree upon a method for making decisions. Members should clearly understand how decisions are made. Someone should have the responsibility for repeating those decisions to the group to make sure everyone understands what was decided.

Rule 7: Decisions which require further action should include WHO is responsible, WHAT is to be done, by WHEN, WHERE it will occur, and HOW it is to be accomplished.

Rule 8: The group should record its work. Write minutes of what your group has done and plans to accomplish. Do this for every meeting. Give everyone a copy or easy access to one. This will help prevent confusion, misunderstanding and forgetfulness. It will inform members who are absent. It will also help you see the progress you've made.

Recognizing meeting phases

Most meetings go through several phases. In the first phase, members of the group socialize and find out what's new. In the second, the group discusses why they have gathered and what they hope to do about their concern. During the third phase, members consider what structure they will use to work on the task at hand. This may include a simple discussion by all

members, the use of brainstorming techniques, or breaking into smaller groups and reporting back to the larger group later. In the fourth, the real work begins. The group tries to accomplish what it has gathered for. In the final phase, the group closes the meeting, either through a summary of what has been discussed, a recommendation for action or a decision about what to do next. The group should feel at this point that it has accomplished something.

The flow of a meeting is not always so neat and tidy. In fact, groups which do not have a clear understanding of what they hope to address or how they want to approach the task may go back and forth between different phases, especially the second, third and fourth. A good group leader is aware of what phase the group is in and helps direct it back or forward as necessary to complete its tasks.

Creating a positive environment for your meeting

There are several considerations for making your meetings enjoyable. While you may not be able to accommodate all of these, the more you do, the better chance your group will want to return in the future.

Find a room. Locate a room that is comfortable (but not too comfortable) to work in. Make sure it is the right size for the occasion and the number of people. See that it is conveniently located for the greatest number of people, that there is parking or public transportation nearby and that it is accessible to everyone, including people who use wheelchairs.

Control the environment. Adjust lights, heat, air conditioning, or windows as needed for people's comfort. If a member of your group smokes, ask that they refrain until the group breaks. Try to limit outside noise or interruptions that may disturb your work.

Arrange the seating. Where people sit affects what happens. Circular or U-shaped seating allows everyone to have eye contact. Groups that can look at each other work better together. A traditional classroom set-up makes one person the authority and inhibits good discussion. Encourage people to sit with those they do not know. This will reduce cliques and increase people's chances of working well together.

Make it worthwhile to attend. No one wants to go to dull, do-nothing meetings. Starting and ending on time shows respect for people's busy lives. If background work is necessary, have tasks assigned beforehand so that time isn't spent on things that could have been done before the meeting. Never have a meeting that isn't necessary. Everyone is busy with work, family, sports or hobbies. Don't have a meeting just to have it; it's a sure way to decrease interest in the future.

Take breaks. If your meetings will be more than an hour long, plan breaks so people can refresh themselves, stretch and get to know each other better. And just as everyone needs a vacation from work, so too they will want to get away from the group for a little while. Plan such breaks when the group seems to need it or when vacations are expected. Follow the break with a booster activity to bring people back with a bang!

DEVELOPING YOUR ALLIANCE PLAN

Once you have a group together, you have some major tasks to accomplish. You need to:

- define and analyze the problems you will work on;
- identify goals for solving the problem;
- develop strategies for reaching your goals;
- create an action plan and carry it out; and
- evaluate your work.

All of these tasks involve group decision making. The technique described below will help you consider possibilities and select options. As you work on various planning tasks, your alliance can use this technique, adapting it to fit your needs at the moment.

Step One: Brainstorm. Begin by gathering ideas. Use a blackboard or large sheet of paper taped to the wall. Everyone should contribute as many ideas as they can. Write down each idea where the whole group can see it. Two guidelines for brainstorming are:

- *No discussion.* Criticism and evaluation of suggestions will come later. Right now the goal is to be all-inclusive, to think of everything. Quantity, not quality, is the aim. Even the most absurd suggestion may trigger a brilliant thought (and at least you'll know you were thorough).

- *Everyone contributes.* Another reason for not criticizing ideas during a brainstorm is so people won't be afraid to speak up spontaneously. If it seems like someone is being left out, try going around the room, round robin style, to get each person's ideas.

Step Two: Discuss Ideas. Let whomever suggested each idea explain what they meant if someone has a question. Discuss what seem to be similar

groupings of ideas. This will also help clarify people's intentions. Add new ideas as they come up.

Step Three: Set priorities. Since your group can't carry out every good suggestion, you will have to select the most important ones to start. At this point, it's not a good idea to take a simple vote without further discussion. Doing so now would create "winners" and "losers." The main idea is for everyone to participate as much as possible in the final decision so they will feel involved in the group and committed to carrying out its decision.

Three techniques which will help you set priorities are group ranking, individual ranking, and the small group method.

Group ranking process

Allow each person an equal opportunity to speak in an open discussion. Combine very similar suggestions, then vote on them. After the first vote, eliminate the bottom half (those receiving the fewest votes) and vote again. Repeat this process until you reach a decision on the top one, two or three ideas you want to address.

Individual ranking process

The individual ranking process is better than the group ranking process since it further helps ensure that no one feels left out or defeated. In this process, each person should write their own list of priorities based on the master list the whole group created. Have them rank the ten ideas they think are most important. When everyone has completed their own list, ask the group, "For the first item on our list, how many people ranked this most important?" Assign that item ten points for each vote. Then ask, "How many people voted this as next most important?" Assign nine points for each vote, and so on down the list for each issue.

Alternatively, one or two people may collect all the lists and tally them while the group takes a break. Once this is done and the points are totaled, identify your group's priorities. Where possible, combine closely-related ideas.

The final step is to take a poll of the top ten suggestions, giving each person two votes. From this you will have decided the most important issues to address.

Small group method

If your group has more than eight people, you can increase and enhance discussion by having the group break into smaller groups. In the small groups, people should try to reach a consensus about the top priorities. In other words, everyone has an equal voice and consensus is not reached until everyone consents to the priorities. People do not have to agree totally, but neither should they strongly disagree. There is likely to be much rewording, bargaining and give-and-take. But everyone will feel they've had a share in the final decision. Once the smaller groups have finished, gather again as a whole and try to reach consensus between the smaller groups.

During the final decision-making discussion, your group may revise suggestions, combine several ideas in creative ways, or compromise between them. It is often tempting to try to satisfy everyone by including everything as a goal. However, don't let your group set itself up for failure by trying to do too much at once.

Reaching consensus requires that everyone is heard and the concerns of each individual are considered by the whole group. The final decision should be one that all or most members accept as being a good choice right now, whether or not they personally feel it is the best choice.

To reach such a decision, you will have to balance the limited time and energy of the group with the need to come to an agreement. Don't let endless haggling spoil your meeting and wear people out. Expect individuals to put the well being of the group ahead of their personal crusades.

On the other hand, a serious split in the group, with many members holding conflicting views, may warrant an extra meeting. You may also need, at some point, to agree to disagree and move in separate directions, hopefully as allies. By all means, try to work out your differences first. If you do split after sincerely trying to work together, don't consider your efforts a failure. Rather, you have simply concluded that, for whatever reason, each group must pursue its own course for the time being.

Defining the problem

After identifying your concerns as a group, the next step is to assess further the issues you have selected. To define and understand the problem you are concerned with, ask yourselves these questions (you may do this activity as a

whole group or divide the questions among smaller groups and bring the results back to the whole group for additions and further discussion):

- What is it about the problem that concerns us? Why does it concern us? What makes it a problem?

- What factors contribute to the problem? (Areas to consider include values, attitudes, behaviors, inadequate policies, what various agencies and groups do or don't do, misinformation or the lack of any information, inadequate services, the economy, and social pressures.)

- How do these factors relate to each other?

- Who is involved in the problem and in what ways? (The answer will indicate the extent of the problem and how different people will be involved in the solution. Representatives of those people should be brought into your group as quickly as possible, assuming they share your concerns and some commitment to solving the problem. You should include those who are part of the problem but are seeking change. You need not include those who may be opposed to what you're doing but you should communicate openly with them. This will decrease the likelihood of their becoming obstacles. If you seek their participation in your group, you will have gone a long way toward reducing their opposition and perhaps winning them over.)

- What are the attitudes or ideas we want to alter? Who thinks that way and why?

- What are the behaviors we want to change in the people who seem to have the problem and in those with whom they interact (families, friends, employers, service agencies, government, teachers, others)?

- Is the problem a symptom of broader, more serious underlying problems such as discrimination, inequality or group conflicts?

- What other information do we need to better understand the problem? Where do we get that information?

The more specific you are, the easier it will be to focus your activities. It is extremely important that you consider a broad range of factors so as to

avoid the trap of blaming someone or some group. Blaming will only arouse hostility. Every problem has many facets and causes. A community's problem is everyone's responsibility.

Determining your target of change

Having defined the problem, you may feel overwhelmed by how large it seems and what is required to address it. If so, you should limit your scope. You can do this by looking more closely at the area you live in and deciding what your target community is. The information you gather in doing this will also help you better understand and plan for change in that community.

A community can be many things:

- a residential area (such as a city block, neighborhood, housing development, or subdivision);
- a political unit (a voting ward, city, county, or township);
- a place where common services are shared (a park, school, social service agency, or shopping center); or
- an institution (a school, college, workplace, club, church, or neighborhood center).

To be effective in changing your community, you will need to develop activities and strategies which will be accepted by a broad range of citizens. This requires that you know as much as you can about who makes up this community and how they think, feel and act.

You will find it useful to examine general aspects such as:

- the demographics of the population (age, sex, marital status, race or ethnicity, religion, political affiliation);
- community leadership, both formal (elected officials, for example) and informal (people who are influential because of their knowledge, skills, popularity, wealth, or involvement);
- social networks, including clubs, organizations and places where people congregate and socialize;

- sources of communication (television, radio, newspapers, newsletters, bulletin boards, and other informal means);

- beliefs and values shared widely throughout the community as well as those that vary by groups;

- the local economy (major employers, rates of unemployment, types of occupation, levels of income); and

- community pride and spirit and how it is expressed.

In addition to these, you will need to understand the wide range of community attitudes, values and behaviors surrounding the use of alcohol and other drugs by youth and adults. Be careful not to simplify the issue.

You might begin by finding out how available alcohol and other drugs are currently. Count the number of bars and retail outlets where alcohol is sold within a geographic area. Look at the availability of cigarette machines and whether tobacco products are sold to minors. Try to determine the kind of information people have about how easily and where illicit drugs may be obtained. A key to availability is promotion. Assess the level of advertising for alcohol and tobacco products through the use of billboards and television, radio and newspaper advertising.

Next, examine the attitudes within the community toward alcohol and other drugs. Study what are considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Evaluate the contexts (such as family events, religious celebrations, sporting events or parties) in which the use of alcohol and other drugs is allowed or not. Discover how different groups (by age, sex, religion, race or ethnicity) differ in their attitudes.

Determine whether the community considers alcohol and other drug use a problem and, if so, what efforts it has made to address it. This will include activities by schools, employers, law enforcement, social service agencies, and community organizations.

Where to get information about your community

You have several inexpensive ways of obtaining information about alcohol and other drug issues in your community. You can conduct simple research to find out how others think and feel through discussions, interviews or surveys (at shopping malls, markets, county fair booths, parks, or through newsletters).

Listen to radio talk shows. Hold focus groups (gatherings of people representative of segments of the community who spend an hour or so together to talk about their concerns and opinions). Distribute anonymous questionnaires. Don't focus only on the most outspoken or committed people; try to get information from the less visible, less outspoken, maybe less concerned people as well.

You can obtain alcohol and other drug statistics from police and traffic reports, alcohol and other drug prevention and treatment agencies, schools, hospitals, and state and local government. Don't forget to search for additional statistical information in libraries and newspapers or from university faculty and advocacy groups.

Your purpose in gathering information should be to develop an overall picture of your community. What you're after is general, aggregate information that tells you the extent of the problem, how different groups are affected, and how they perceive the issue. You are unlikely to get information such as who has been in treatment for alcohol or other drug abuse; such information is confidential and laws exist to protect people's privacy.

Developing strategies

You are now ready to develop some strategies for the problems you want to address. The first step is to decide how things should look in the future. These broad statements of purpose, or goals, do not have to be immediately achievable. Some may be very long range. Nevertheless, they are your group's vision of an aspect of community life somewhere down the road.

A well-written goal statement provides others with a clear understanding of what you're trying to achieve and its scope. Your goal statement might be to prevent alcohol and other drug use by elementary school students. To achieve this goal, you should develop shorter-term steps called objectives. These objectives should be written so that they clearly state, in measurable terms, what must be accomplished. They should include the result you expect, the target population, and the time frame. Your objectives should also include either the proportion of the target population expected to show change or the amount of change expected.

Here are two examples:

1. By September 1, 1999, 70% of all teachers at the River City elementary school will teach an alcohol and other drug prevention curriculum.

2. By September 1, 1999, the 6th graders in River City will show a 70% increase in the number of socially acceptable ways to refuse an offer of alcohol.

The first example takes this format:

By _____, _____ of _____ will _____.
(when) (percent) (who) (result)

The second example is slightly different. It's format is:

By _____, _____ will _____ of _____.
(when) (who) (percent) (result)

Either format is acceptable. The more realistic your goals, the more likely you can achieve them. Yet, loosing your imaginations will set free a multitude of creative ideas. Allow both the pragmatist and the idealist in each of you have a say.

Your second step is to develop some ways of reaching these goals and objectives. You know where you are now, having just assessed the community, and where you want to go. How do you get there? Return to the group technique outlined above.

Brainstorm all the ways of reaching your goal. Ten to fifteen minutes of brainstorming will produce many ideas.

Discuss suggestions. Once all the ideas are written down so that everyone can see them, go back over and make sure that everyone understands what the ideas mean. Examine each idea for its usefulness. You should consider two aspects when evaluating an idea at this stage: feasibility and relevance. Feasibility means how likely it is that you can achieve the idea. Relevance refers to how pertinent it is for your particular community. Allow enough time to discuss the ideas adequately and to begin focusing on ones that have the greatest agreement among group members. The goal is not unanimous endorsement but reaching consensus on an idea that all can support and help implement.

Set priorities. Identify the two to five ideas that are the most feasible and relevant. The strategies you select may not fully achieve your goal, but they should move you toward it significantly.

At this point during your considerations you will find it helpful to ask for assistance from someone knowledgeable about prevention. Some activities and strategies seem workable but aren't. Find out from your prevention consultant if research has shown the likelihood of success or failure of your ideas.

There is a final step to take before you act to solve the problem. You should develop a plan of action which clearly states what tasks need to be done, by whom, by what date, with what results. This plan, which each member of the group should receive, will provide a guideline for your efforts and a tool to measure progress.

As you enter the implementation stage, bear in mind that flexibility is a useful quality. Your solutions may need altering to fit a changing situation. New information, resources, and people may become a part of your activities. Successful community action encourages the growth of community participation. It's a way of taking advantage of everyone's imagination and skills.

FORMULATING YOUR ACTION PLAN

You now know what the problem is, who's involved, and how you want to change it. It's time to get beyond planning and go out into the community. An action plan will help you start and keep on track.

An action plan answers:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- How? and
- To what extent?

Your entire alliance needs an action plan, as does each committee, subcommittee, or major activity. These plans should be jointly developed by everyone who has responsibilities for parts of them. Give each person involved in a particular plan a copy of it. And periodically review your plans in order to evaluate your accomplishments and make any necessary changes.

This manual contains an Action Plan Form at the end which you can use to create the plans for your alliance. A sample action plan for one strategy might look like this:

Date: January 1, 1995

Person responsible for this plan: Joan Smith will coordinate.

Goal: To prevent alcohol and other drug abuse by River City elementary school students by improving family life.

Objective: By September 30, 1995, the River City Alliance will help 70% of the parents of our middle schoolers develop their family management skills.

How we will accomplish this: We will distribute copies of *Start At Home: A Parent's Guide to Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention* by Douglas White.

When we will do it: March 1 - September 30, 1995.

Where we will do it: We will mail copies directly to the homes of elementary school students in River City.

To what extent: We will reach 140 of the 200 families of elementary school students in River City.

Tasks and people responsible:

Purchase copies of *Start At Home,* envelopes, and labels. (Joan Smith)
Develop mailing list of families. (Karen Peterson)
Write and make copies of cover letter for the mailing. (Ralph Horton)
Stuff the envelopes. (Everyone)
Take to post office. (Greg Green)

Resources we need: Money for postage, photocopies, envelopes, labels, copies of *Start At Home;* room for stuffing envelopes.

Obstacles we may face: Lack of money. To solve this, we will ask ABC Corporation to purchase *Start At Home* as a donation. We will request support from each church and synagogue in River City to cover the cost of the mailing.

Results we expect: At least 50% of the families receiving the parent's guide will better understand how they can set firm rules about drinking and other drug use, take action if their child is using alcohol or other drugs, and be aware of the examples they set for their children on the use of alcohol and other drugs. We will assess the results by conducting a phone survey of those receiving the parent's book before and after receiving it.

As you develop your own action plans, be sure to establish clearly defined, manageable tasks, responsibilities and time lines. They can be adjusted, but expectations about achievements should be clear. Include times to check progress, to discuss and deal with problems that may arise, and to reassess where you are going.

Evaluation

Before you carry out your action plan, decide how you will measure your success. This need not be a complex task, but it must be considered before you start. Why? First, because people should see what they're accomplishing as they work on the plan. Second, you can use this information for future plans and directions. It is possible to plan and conduct evaluation of your efforts after you have implemented your plan. However, your evaluation will have less error and bias and more integrity if it is carefully thought out as part of the plan itself.

You have many ways of looking for success. Did you do something as often as planned and with as many people? Did the things you set out to change in fact do so? How much? It's easiest to evaluate your activities in numeric terms. Measure the success of your action plan by measuring the frequency and quantity of various items on your plan. Were deadlines met? Were enough people reached?

You can also measure the outcomes and effects of your actions to see if your action plan met the goals you set. For example, did people learn or do something new? You can compare the situation as it was when you got started and after you carried out your plan. What was different? What stayed the same? If you build in some sort of success-failure scale from the start, you will find it easier to gauge whether or not things are going well. Your evaluation should be an ongoing process to help adjust your activities and expectations. It should also assist you in focusing your activities on what's possible.

Don't measure your success by a failure to change the whole community. Make judgments based only on what you set out to do in a very limited, clear way. Everything else that changes can be added on as a fringe benefit.

Additional help in evaluating your project can be obtained by contacting evaluation specialists at local social service agencies, colleges (departments of sociology, psychology, journalism, and social work), and your state government (alcohol and other drug agencies, mental health centers, and regional health planning groups).

Remember to write everything down—action plans, time lines, data gathered. This will help everyone see what occurred, what was supposed to happen and what your group's hopes were. If you decide to seek funds for future efforts, obtain "official" support or get help from busy people, your written records will help convince them that you're organized and know what you're doing.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR PREVENTING ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE

There are many activities your alliance may consider for preventing alcohol and other drug abuse in your community. Some early ones to consider for alliance members themselves are basic training on alcohol and other drug abuse and its prevention, development of collaborative groups and cooperative provision of services between existing local agencies and your alliance, and conducting an extensive community needs assessment.

The following suggestions apply to key individuals, organizations and service agencies. They are based on a combination of prevention and early intervention strategies. Keep in mind that it is equally important that communities also have a range of treatment and aftercare services to support prevention efforts and care for people with problems. Without these, prevention efforts will not be nearly as effective.

What families can do

Information: Discuss family traditions and rules about alcohol. If alcoholism, tobacco or other drug dependency have occurred in the family, discuss them. Such discussions may help all family members reach healthier personal decisions about their own behaviors. Also discuss the effects of alcohol and other drugs, signs and symptoms of use, and how to avoid problems. Family members should know about community resources that provide information and help people with problems.

Education: Consider participation in some workshops that teach parenting skills. Support use of prevention curricula in your school. Learn how to communicate better, to analyze media messages, to model legal and healthy use or abstinence, and to refuse offers of alcohol or other drugs.

Early intervention: Families experiencing problems with use and abuse may need to participate in self-help support groups. Local alcohol and other drug treatment services can assist with finding these.

Alternatives to drugs: Special family times, celebrations without alcohol or other drugs, and some teens' activities in the home are helpful. Family strengthening activities combined with information and clear no-use rules for minors may go far to prevent early use of chemicals. Delaying the first use of drugs (especially alcohol, tobacco, marijuana) is one of the most effective forms of prevention of later problems.

Policy: Develop a clear, precise and enforceable family policy regarding alcohol and other drugs. Include what's allowed or not, at what age, and with consequences for rules that are broken. Parents should be supportive of each other and of school policies in this area. Policies should recognize that alcohol and other drug use by minors is undesirable, that anyone can have problems or make unfortunate decisions, but that these can be corrected and people can receive help. Policies may bend but not to the point that they are weakened or made meaningless.

Other Ideas: Join other parents in forming a network to discuss common problems and concerns, provide mutual support, monitor your children's activities, and set and reinforce common standards regarding your children and alcohol and other drugs. Such groups can also work together to influence school and community policies. Co-sponsor and participate with others in positive youth and family events such as dances, trips, picnics, and other recreational activities. Support and sponsor community parent and youth meetings to discuss ways of handling alcohol and other drug issues. Provide time for youth who need help (for example, through Big Brothers/Sisters). Support family members and friends who wish to reduce their use of alcohol or other drugs.

If you serve alcohol to guests, always make non-alcoholic drinks available, too. Agree not to drink when driving or operating other vehicles or machinery. Discourage friends and guests from doing so. Reduce or eliminate alcohol, tobacco and other drug use when you are pregnant or are around someone who is. Examine and monitor family use of non-prescription drugs. Eliminate unnecessary use. Learn alternative ways to handle situations for which you currently use drugs (such as stress- and tension-reducing methods to avoid headaches).

36

What schools, colleges and universities can do

Information: Provide information (in classrooms, library/media centers, and other student services locations) on the physical, emotional, social, and legal consequences of using drugs. Consider hosting community drug-free days including films, speakers and drug information.

Education: Offer a comprehensive prevention curriculum for all students in all grades that covers alcohol and other drug information, communication, assertiveness, decision making, and other coping skills. The messages of this curriculum should agree with messages being promoted by community prevention efforts so as to avoid inconsistent, mixed messages. Offer training for professionals and parents. Encourage parent support groups.

Early intervention: Develop a student assistance program or strengthen an existing one through additional training, evaluation of results and increased community participation. To accompany this, develop an employee assistance program for all school employees. These programs often spark imitation by community businesses and programs who look to education for leadership.

Alternatives to drugs: Provide fulfilling, meaningful activities that are important for youth and adults. Help students understand their personal needs and how to fill them. Sponsor alternative events and activities such as Just Say No clubs, drug-free staff and student days, alcohol-free dances, graduation and prom-related events. Make your space available to community alliances working on the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse.

Policy: Develop and promote an alcohol and other drug policy covering possession, use and addiction for students and staff. Stress consequences and procedures to follow. The policy should especially encourage confronting student and staff problems. It should be based on concern for those affected.

Other ideas: Open recreational and student union areas after school hours. Offer tutoring by older students. Establish student juries for grievance and discipline problems. Establish a parent-teacher-student advisory group. Offer job-finding and career-planning classes and services. Hold monthly open discussion sessions between students and administrators. Develop ways in which students can meaningfully participate in prevention planning activities.

37

What religious organizations can do

Information: Provide information via mailings, sermons and Sunday School classes. Display posters and notices in support of community prevention efforts. Provide information about how your religion, congregation and clergy regard alcohol and other drug use.

Education: Churches or synagogues may offer workshops and courses on parenting, youth leadership, and a variety of drug issues. Encourage discussion of religious values as they relate to alcohol and other drug issues. Include alcohol and other drug education courses in seminary.

Early intervention: In their role as helpers of troubled individuals and families, clergy play a key part in early problem intervention. Clergy knowledgeable about techniques and strategies, can greatly facilitate someone's getting help. Establish employee assistance programs for the clergy of a particular faith or through a community clergy consortium. Religious organizations may consider providing some summer student assistance services.

Alternatives to drugs: Strengthen youth group activities by adding a drug-free message. Help youth develop their own alternatives to drugs. Existing family activities, already positive in nature, might benefit from adding a drug-free theme.

Policy: Demonstrate your sensitivity to, and support for, people recovering from drug abuse by offering grape juice instead of wine at religious events. Serve nonalcoholic beverages at social events. Clarify your policy on the use of alcohol and other drugs on church/synagogue property and at events which you sponsor.

What law enforcement and the justice system can do

Information: Routinely announce current statistics and drug information and make them available to the media and general public. Provide legal information to schools, youth and adult groups, civic organizations, and

others. Develop informational brochures on where to get help for families experiencing turmoil or disruption.

Education: Offer alcohol and other drug abuse workshops for all law enforcement personnel. Offer presentations to schools, community organizations, social service agencies, district attorneys, probation and parole officers, and related professionals. Obtain training in crisis intervention to enhance your ability to handle stressful situations. Such training will hopefully result in better referrals to helping agencies. Join educational events with other community agencies.

Early intervention: Due to the stresses of law enforcement work, departments should provide employee assistance programs to all employees and their family members.

Alternatives to drugs: Be present at certain community/school events. This will signal your intention to enforce existing policies and relay a message of care, concern and trust to all people in the community. Sponsor youth activities. Volunteer for community boards and groups. Model appropriate use of alcohol and other drugs.

Policy: Law enforcement and the legal system play the most critical role here. They are involved from start to finish with most violations of existing law or policy. Laws should be well known and equitably and consistently enforced. Publicize clear intentions of the law. Mandate early referrals to helping agencies. Provide treatment alternative programs (TAP) and restitution programs for youth and adults.

Other ideas: Formalize a system to respond to kids' complaints. Close off to traffic selected streets that can be used for play and recreation. Offer tours of the police department and night time ride alongs. Teach judo, karate, self-defense, gun safety, auto and bike safety, and crime prevention activities. Encourage youth to observe a day in adult court. Establish youth-guide corps to serve as courthouse volunteers. Evaluate the criteria and policies used for detention. Work to improve detention centers; involve others in this task. Create teen and adult patrols to supervise recreation areas. Offer demonstrations on breathalyzers and how intoxicated drivers are handled.

What the media can do

Monitor advertising related to alcohol, tobacco and over-the-counter drugs. Deemphasize or eliminate advertising and dramatic presentations which show alcohol and other drug abuse as normative. Show moderation and abstinence as common options. Develop news stories about youth involved in positive activities and making contributions to the community. (Youth can be involved in seeking out the story, writing it and doing photography.) Publicize local services and prevention activities. Do a series on young people and the prevention of alcohol/other drug abuse. Coordinate appropriate programming with local prevention efforts. Inform local prevention groups about upcoming programming and features. Report on local alcohol and other drug problems and how they are or could be dealt with. Provide space or time for public service announcements about alcohol, other drug and prevention topics. Assist local groups in development of print and audiovisual materials (through donations of skills, facilities or equipment).

What businesses can do

Information: Offer alcohol and other drug information to employees through employee newsletters, flyers, posters, and brochures enclosed with paychecks. Set aside some of your advertising for support of awareness campaigns around alcohol and other drug abuse prevention.

Education: Cosponsor community education events such as picnics, raffles, fairs, and contests. Establish workshops for employees on parenting and family management skills. Support and cooperate with local prevention efforts. Provide meeting and work space, supplies, expertise, and political support.

Early intervention: Establish or enhance employee assistance programs. Provide supervisors and managers with training on recognizing warning signs of alcohol and other drug abuse.

Alternatives to drugs: Cosponsor events planned by your community alliance. At company events and parties, prominently offer nonalcoholic drinks and smoke-free areas. Establish company wellness policies and programs which enable employees to exercise, reduce stress, and pursue other healthy

interests. Arrange for free time at recreational facilities if your business does not have its own.

Policy: Establish clear and meaningful policies regarding employee use of alcohol and other drugs both on company premises and at company-sponsored events. Develop guidelines and methods for handling problems that arise when employees use of alcohol or other drugs outside of work affects their work.

Other ideas: Businesses with liquor licenses can consistently refuse sales to minors, institute bartender awareness training, discourage drunk driving, refuse to allow adults to buy alcohol for minors, refuse to serve alcohol to intoxicated persons, and offer free, nonalcoholic drinks to designated drivers and pregnant women.

More ideas for what your community can do

Help develop positive roles for youth in the community. Create youth internships and apprenticeships. Develop projects for youth that are important to the community (cleaning up a park, renovating a community center, helping the police and other services develop better ways to help youth). Volunteer as an adult or peer leader to work with existing youth groups such as 4-H, scouts, Campfire, and church youth groups. If these don't exist, help to start them. Sponsor recognition days and banquets focused on the achievements of youth. Involve youth in planning, organizing, and implementing positive recreational and social activities. These should especially occur during times when alcohol and other drug abuse seems most prevalent (weekends, holidays, skip days, proms, and before and after athletic events and graduation). Provide free medical care and advice (through clinics, phone lines, newspaper columns) for youth. Establish, when appropriate, voting positions for youth on various decision-making bodies. Create a youth bulletin board for notices about jobs, workshops and recreational activities. Take troubled youth under your wing. Show them you care. Establish community drug-free awareness days involving all facets of the community. Conduct community poster, essay and logo contests with themes regarding the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse. Hold community and neighborhood potlucks with local speakers.

41

This list is merely a beginning. Some of the ideas here will work better than others for your alliance and your community. Don't be afraid to try something. You might be surprised—and pleased—with the results.

What can you do? Lots! Alcohol and other drug abuse is a big problem, but it can be solved. Working together, you and your alliance can make your community a better place to live. With the right vision and determination, there is little that can stop you.

42

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

The groups listed below can help your alliance in its organizing and prevention efforts. They offer a variety of information services, products, training, technical assistance, and grants. Write or call them with specific questions regarding your group's needs. If you need more information on these and other resources, contact your state's alcohol and other drug agency, RADAR Network center, or the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information.

Organizations in every state

State Alcohol and Other Drug Agency: Each state has one or more alcohol and other drug agencies. To contact yours, call a local alcohol or other drug agency.

RADAR Network: Each state has an alcohol and other drug information center as part of the RADAR (Regional Alcohol and Drug Awareness Resource) Network. To contact yours, call a state or local alcohol or other drug agency. Or contact the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD, 20852. 301/468-2600.

National organizations

ACTION Drug Prevention Program
806 Connecticut Avenue, NW, #M513
Washington, DC 20525
202/623-9380

Alcohol and Drug Problems
Association of North America
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 706
Washington, DC 20001
202/737-4340

American Council for Drug
Education
204 Monroe Street
Suite 110
Rockville, MD 20850
301/294-0600

Associates for Youth Development,
Inc.
P.O. Box 36748
Tucson, AZ 85740
602/297-1056

Chemical People Institute
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
412/391-0900

43

Clearinghouse for Drugs and Crime
1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850
301/251-5531

Community Intervention
529 South 7th Street
Suite 570
Minneapolis, MN 55415
800/328-0417

CORK Institute on Black Alcohol and Drug Abuse
Morehouse School of Medicine
720 Westview Drive, SW
Atlanta, GA 30310-1495
404/752-1530

Department of Education
Office of Alcohol and Drug Education
Washington, DC 20202-3726
202/732-4161

Department of Education Drug Free Schools and Communities Regional Training Centers:

Midwest Regional Center for Drug Free School and Communities
2001 North Clybourn
Room 302
Chicago, IL 60614
312/883-8888

Northeast Regional Center for Drug Free Schools and Communities
P.O. Box 403
Sayville, NY 11782
516/589-7022

Southwest Regional Center for Drug Free Schools and Communities
555 Constitution Avenue
Room 138
Norman, OK 73037
405/325-1454

Western Center for Drug Free Schools and Communities
101 SW Main Street
Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
503/275-9500

Southeast Regional Center for Drug Free Schools and Communities
50 Hurt Plaza
Atlanta, GA 30303
404/688-9227

Drug Enforcement Administration
1405 I Street, NW
Room 1209
Washington, DC 20537
202/633-1469

Drug Policy Office
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
202/226-3040

Employee Assistance Professionals Association
4601 North Fairfax Drive
Suite 1001
Arlington, VA 22203
703/522-6272

44

Families in Action Drug Information Center
2296 Henderson Mill Road
Suite 204
Atlanta, GA 30345
404/934-6364

Institute on Black Chemical Abuse
2616 Nicolet Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612/871-7878

Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems
1040 B Street
Suite 300
San Rafael, CA 94901
415/456-5692

Mothers Against Drunk Driving
669 Airport Freeway
Suite 310
Hurst, TX 76053
817/268-6233

Multicultural Training Resource Center
1540 Market Street
Suite 320
San Francisco, CA 94102
415/855-1237

National AIDS Information Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 6003
Rockville, MD 20850
301/762-5111

National Association for Children of Alcoholics
31582 Coast Highway
Suite B
South Laguna, CA 92677
714/499-3889

National Association of Leadership for Student Assistance Programs
P.O. Box 21838
Milwaukee, WI 53221

National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 520
Washington, DC 20001
202/783-6868

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20852
301/468-2600

National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations
1030 15th Street, NW
Suite 1053
202/371-2100

National Council on Alcoholism
12 West 21st Street
New York, NY 10010
212/206-6770

45

National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006
202/393-7141

National Federation of Parents for Drug Free Youth
1423 North Jefferson Street
Springfield, MO 65802
417/836-3709

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
5600 Fishers Lane
Room 14C-17
Rockville, MD 20857
301/443-2954

National Institute on Drug Abuse
5600 Fishers Lane
Room 10-04
Rockville, MD 20857
301/443-4577

National Organization of Student Assistance Programs and Professionals
250 Arapahoe
Boulder, CO 80302
303/449-8077

National Prevention Network
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 520
Washington, DC 20001
202/783-6868

National PTA
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611
312/787-0977

Office of Substance Abuse Prevention
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Room 9A-54
Rockville, MD 20857
301/443-0365

Prevention and Intervention Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse
2000 North Fordem Avenue
Madison, WI 53704
608/246-7606

Prevention Center
250 Arapahoe
Boulder, CO 80302
303/449-8077

Prevention Research Center
2532 Durant Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704
415/468-1111

Project CORK
9 Maynard Street
Hanover, NH 03756
603/646-7540

Students Against Driving Drunk
P.O. Box 800
Marlboro, MA 01752
617/481-3568

46

Wisconsin Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 1468
Madison, WI 53701
608/263-2797

Canadian organizations

Addiction Research Foundation
33 Russell Street
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S1
416/595-6144

Wisconsin organizations

RADAR Network: Wisconsin's contact for the RADAR network is the Wisconsin Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 1468, Madison, WI, 53701. 608/263-2797.

These statewide groups offer a variety of services and products on alcohol and other drug abuse. For local services, contact your county unified services/51.42 board or consult the Wisconsin Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services Directory available from the Wisconsin Clearinghouse.

Alcohol and Other Drug Programs
Department of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
608/266-0963

Alliance for a Drug Free Wisconsin
101 South Webster
Madison, WI 53707
608/266-9923

AIDS/HIV Program
Division of Health
P.O. Box 309
Madison, WI 53701
608/267-5287

Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Studies
610 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53703
608/263-8268

DePaul Training Institute
4143 South 13th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53221
800/472-8770

Department of Justice
P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707
608/266-1221

47

Office on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, Department of Health and Social Services
P.O. Box 7851
Madison, WI 53707
608/266-2717

Prevention and Intervention Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse
2000 North Fordem Avenue
Madison, WI 53704
608/246-7606

State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707
608/266-9170

Wisconsin Association on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, Inc.
2801 West Beltline Highway
Madison, WI 53713
608/273-8616

Wisconsin Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 1468
Madison, WI 53701
608/263-2797

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Document Sales
P.O. Box 7713
Madison, WI 53707
608/246-3265

Wisconsin Federation of Parents for Drug Free Youth
P.O. Box 150
Mishicot, WI 54228
414/755-4516

Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, Inc.
30 West Mifflin Street
Suite 310
Madison, WI 53703
608/255-6351

Wisconsin Prevention Network
P.O. Box 1092
Madison, WI 53701

48

ACTION PLAN FORM

Date:

Person responsible for this plan:

Goal:

Objective:

How we will accomplish this:

When we will do it:

Where we will do it:

To what extent:

Tasks and people responsible:

Resources we need:

Obstacles we may face:

Results we expect:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WISCONSIN CLEARINGHOUSE

P.O. Box 1468 Madison, WI 53701 (608) 263-2797